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ABSTRACT

This report describes the status of gender and race/ethnicity enrollments in vocational programs in Connecticut's comprehensive high schools. Data are based on a sample of nine representative schools in urban, rural, and suburban communities. Enrollment data for the 1988-89 school year are from the State Department of Education and represent eight vocational programs. The report consists of five major sections. Section A describes the gender distribution in all vocational programs in the schools combined to create a baseline for comparison. Section B describes enrollments of males and females by vocational program in each school. Section C describes the gender distribution of students by racial/ethnic classification in vocational programs in the urban, rural, and suburban schools. Section D describes enrollments of females by racial/ethnic classification in vocational programs in the sample schools. Section E discusses these findings: females are still marginalized in occupations traditional for their gender; gender distributions are generally the same across racial/ethnic classifications based on a comparison of urban, suburban, and rural schools; and females are segregated in traditional occupations for their gender regardless of racial/ethnic classifications. (Twenty charts are provided. Appendixes include a graph showing racial/ethnic distributions of students, vocational program descriptions, and socioeconomic data for districts represented in the sample schools.) (YLB)

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GENDER EQUITY IN VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS: A STATUS REPORT, 1988-1989

A report to the State Department of Education Division of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education

THE VOCATIONAL EQUITY RESEARCH, TRAINING AND EVALUATION CENTER (VERTEC)

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VERTEC, a joint project of the School of Education at the University of Connecticut and the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, is funded through a gender equity grant from the Division of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education of the State Department of Education.

October 1991

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B. Vocational program descriptions.

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We would like to thank several individuals in the CSDE Division of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education, Bureau of Vocational Services, who have provided technical assistance on this project: Leslie Averna, David Gifford and Gregory Kane. Without their assistance this report would not have been possible.

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We would like to thank Diana Woolis, Acting Chief, CSDE Division of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education, Bureau of Employment and Training, for her continued efforts to promote equity in Connecticut's schools.

INTRODUCTION

The Vocational Equity Research, Training and Evaluation Center (VERTEC), funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education, initiates reports on vocational programs in order to assess the status of equity in educational institutions in the state. In 1988, VERTEC conducted a study of equity in the programs of the state system of vocational-technical schools. At that time, VERTEC stressed the significance of equity studies that (1) sensitize individuals to the persistence and extent of gender differences in enrollments and completions within specific vocational programs and (2) discern how race/ethnicity may interact with gender to produce pockets of under-representation. VERTEC believes that the systematic monitoring of gender and race/ethnicity enrollments--through descriptive and interpretive research--can provide critical guideposts for assessing the progress of sex bias elimination efforts.

This report describes the status of gender and race/ethnicity enrollments in vocational programs in a sample of Connecticut's comprehensive high schools. Our goals are to offer information to policymakers; provide a model to schools for assessing the equity of enrollments in vocational programs; and provide a guide for school districts interested in describing the population of students enrolled in vocational programs. We hope that the baseline data from this study can be used by school districts to evaluate their efforts at achieving gender and racial/ethnic balancing in vocational program offerings.

The report consists of five major sections:

SECTION A. A description of the gender distribution in all of the vocational programs in the 9 sample schools combined to create a baseline for comparison.

SECTION B. A description of enrollments of males and females by vocational programs in each of the 9 sample schools.

SECTION C. A description of the gender distribution of students by racial/ethnic classification in vocational programs in the 3 urban, suburban, and rural sample schools.

SECTION D. A description of enrollments of females by racial/ethnic classification in vocational programs in the sample schools.

SECTION E. A discussion of the findings.

While all vocational programs enroll both male and female students, enrollments in most programs have traditionally been dominated by one gender or the other. This report documents this pattern of sex segregation. We posed three basic questions:

1. Is there a common pattern of sex segregation found uniformly in vocational programs in most comprehensive high schools? The answer to this question is yes. The charts in sections A and B clearly show that Technology Education and Trade and Industrial Education are male dominated programs, while Business Education, Consumer Home Economics, Health Occupations, and Occupational Home Economics are female dominated. Only Agricultural Education and Marketing Education show enrollment patterns approaching equity.

2. Are there significant differences in patterns of sex segregation by racial/ethnic classification among urban, suburban, and rural schools? The answer to this question is no. Males and females regardless of racial and ethnic classifications cluster in traditional sex stereotypical programs across geographic locations.

3. Are there significant differences in patterns of female enrollments among racial/ethnic groups? For example, are White females and African-American females enrolling in the same female-dominated programs, or in different ones. The answer to this question is no. Females are clustered in traditional occupations across racial and ethnic classifications.

METHODOLOGY

Based upon our information on vocational programs offerings in the state (Connecticut Education Directory, 1990) and a review of the literature on geographic representation in vocational education, VERTEC chose a sample of representative schools. In order to describe the student populations in vocational programs in the comprehensive high schools, nine schools were selected to represent urban (3), rural (3) and suburban (3) communities in the state of Connecticut. All 9 schools were selected due to comparable enrollment sizes. The urban high schools are located in the state's three largest cities: Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven. The suburban high schools are located near the cities of Hartford, New Haven, and Danbury. The rural schools are regional high schools (of several combined towns) in the southcentral and northwestern sections of the state. The 9 schools are:

Urban

New Haven - Hillhouse High School
(total school enrollment of 1,265)
Bridgeport - Central High School
(total school enrollment of 1,659)
Hartford - Weaver High School
(total school enrollment of 1,491)

Suburban

East Haven High School
(total school enollment of 782)
Bethel High School
(total school enrollment of 957)
South Windsor High School
(total school enrollment of 1,026)

Rural

District No. 1 - Housatonic Valley Regional High School
(total school enrollment of 464)
District No. 4 - Valley Regional High School
(total school enrollment of 475)
District No. 13 - Coginchaug Regional High School
(total school enrollment of 409)

Enrollment data (as reported on Form ED-400) for the 1988 to 1989 school year was provided by the State Department of Education, Department of Research, Evaluation and Assessment. State department data was collected on pupil enrollments in vocational programs, by course offerings only. Some vocational students are enrolled with cross credits in multiple program areas. Because of the duplication of individuals enrolling in more than one

vocational program, VERTEC does not have simple aggregate numbers of vocational students as a percentage of total school populations.

Enrollment data was collected on eight vocational programs. The three- or four-letter acronym following each name represents abbreviations for identifying vocational program offerings in the graphs included in this report:

Agricultural Education (AGR)
Business Education (BUS)
Consumer Home Economics (CHE)
Health Occupations (HLTH)
Marketing Education (MKT)
Occupational Home Economics (OHE)
Technology Education (TECH)
Trade & Industrial Education (T&I)

(Cooperative Work Experience-Diversified Occupations CWE-DO was not included in this sample because, unlike the courses listed above, it is not an occupational program. Further study might compare CWE-DO and the other occupational programs outlined in this report.)

Student racial/ethnic classifications were identified for the purposes of examining pupil distributions in vocational programs. The racial or ethnic groups differentiated were: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian American, or American Indian.

The CT State Department of Education does not collect data on gender proportions in the schools. VERTEC will assume that there is a 50-50 distribution of male and female students in the total school enrollments. (New legislation calls for the documentation of gender distributions in schools and will be collected beginning in Fall 1991.)

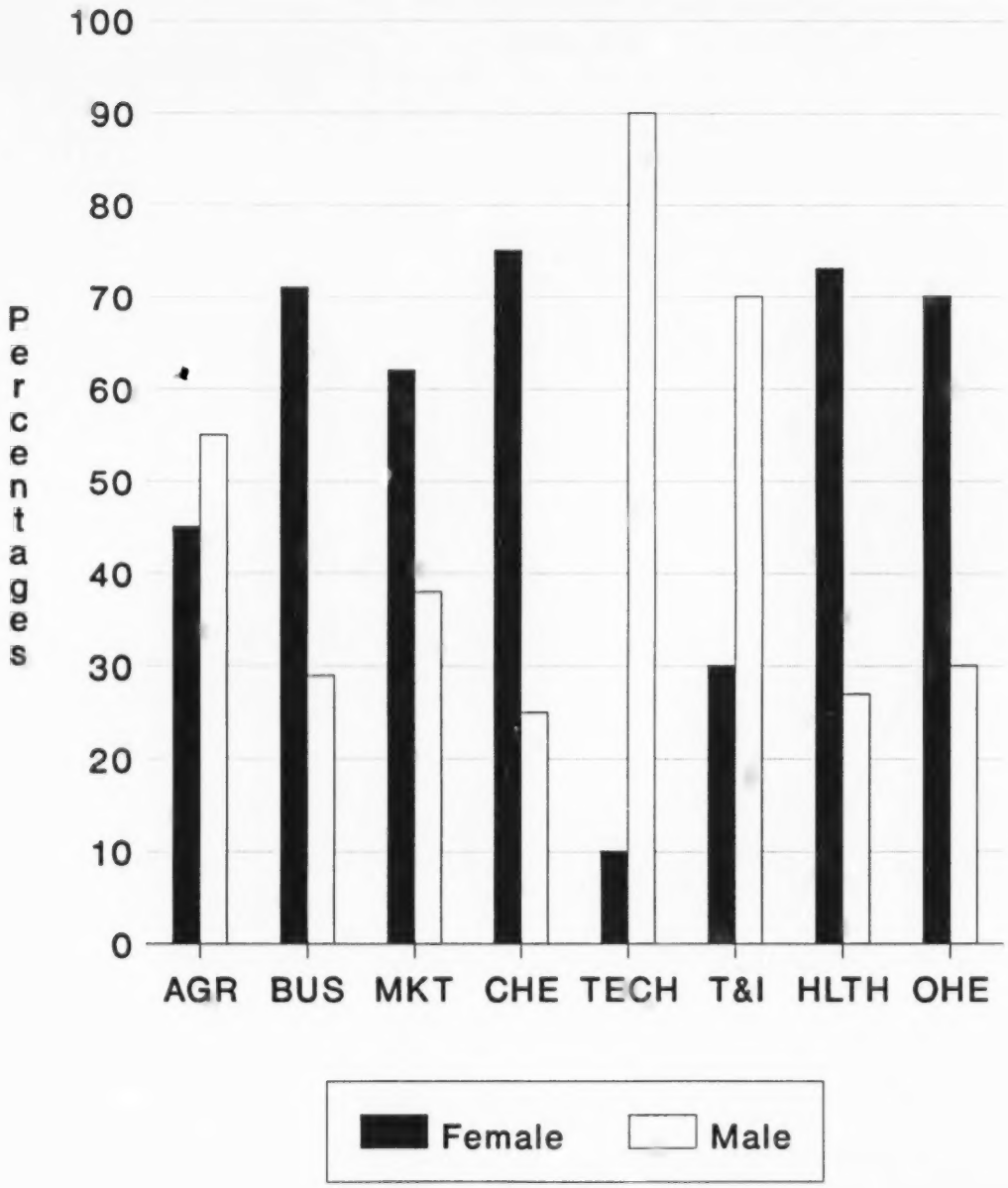
Note: Empty cells in the graphs (no nominal data) indicate that certain vocational programs were not offered at that school or State Department data was unavailable for analysis.

SECTION A
Vocational Enrollments x Gender

Interpretation of Section A

Chart A shows the total distribution of females and males in 8 vocational programs in the sample. The overall picture from this graph is that females are over-represented in occupations traditional for their gender (such as Business Education, Consumer Home Economics, Health Occupations, and Occupational Home Economics); males are over-represented in occupations traditional for their gender (such as Technology Education and Trade & Industrial Education). Agricultural Education and Marketing Education show enrollment patterns approaching equity.

CHART A. VOCATIONAL ENROLLMENTS
Programs by Gender (1988-89)



N= 6535

SECTION B
Vocational Programs x Gender

Interpretation of Section B

The graphs in this section reflect enrollments by gender in the vocational programs in each of the sample schools. The overall picture from these 9 graphs is that females are over-represented in programs traditional for their gender, such as Consumer Home Economics, Occupational Home Economics, Health and Business Education. Moreover, females are under-represented in vocational programs that are nontraditional for their gender, such as Trade & Industrial and Technology Education--male enrollment figures average 80 percent or more in these two program offerings. Marketing Education shows enrollment patterns approaching equity.

CHART B.1 - New Haven Hillhouse
Program Enrollments

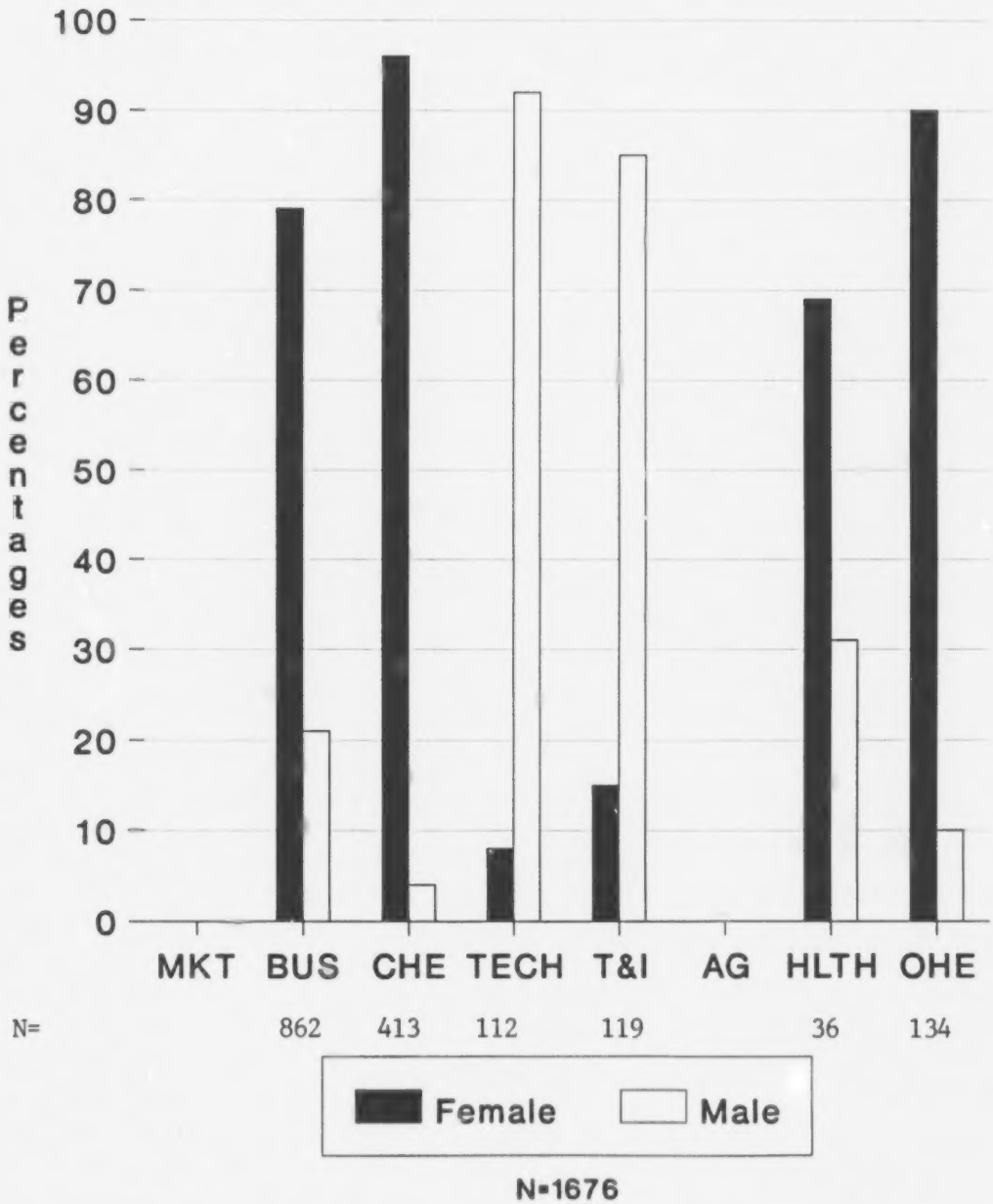
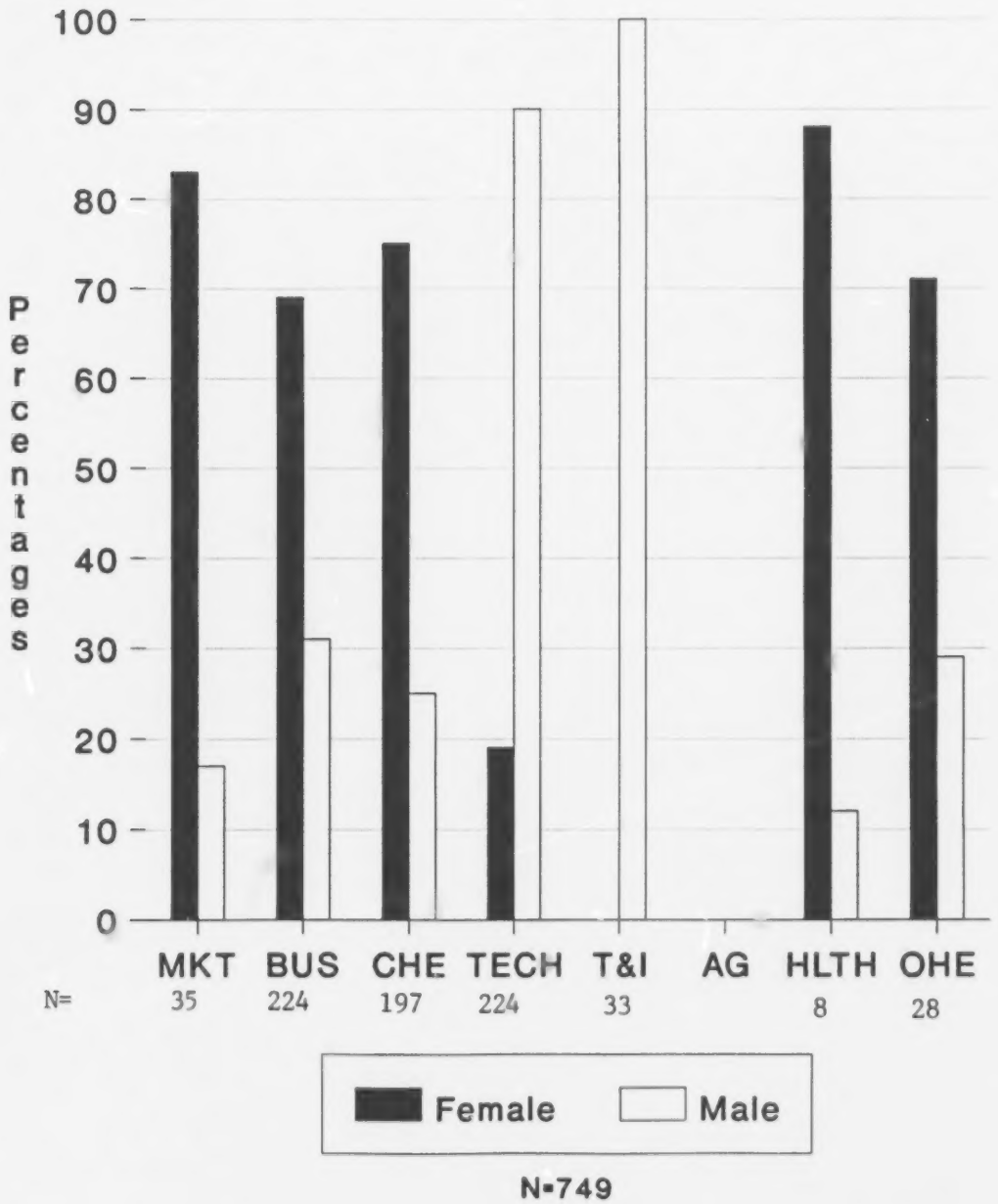


CHART B.2 - Bridgeport Central
Program Enrollments



N=749

CHART B.3 - Hartford Weaver
Program Enrollments

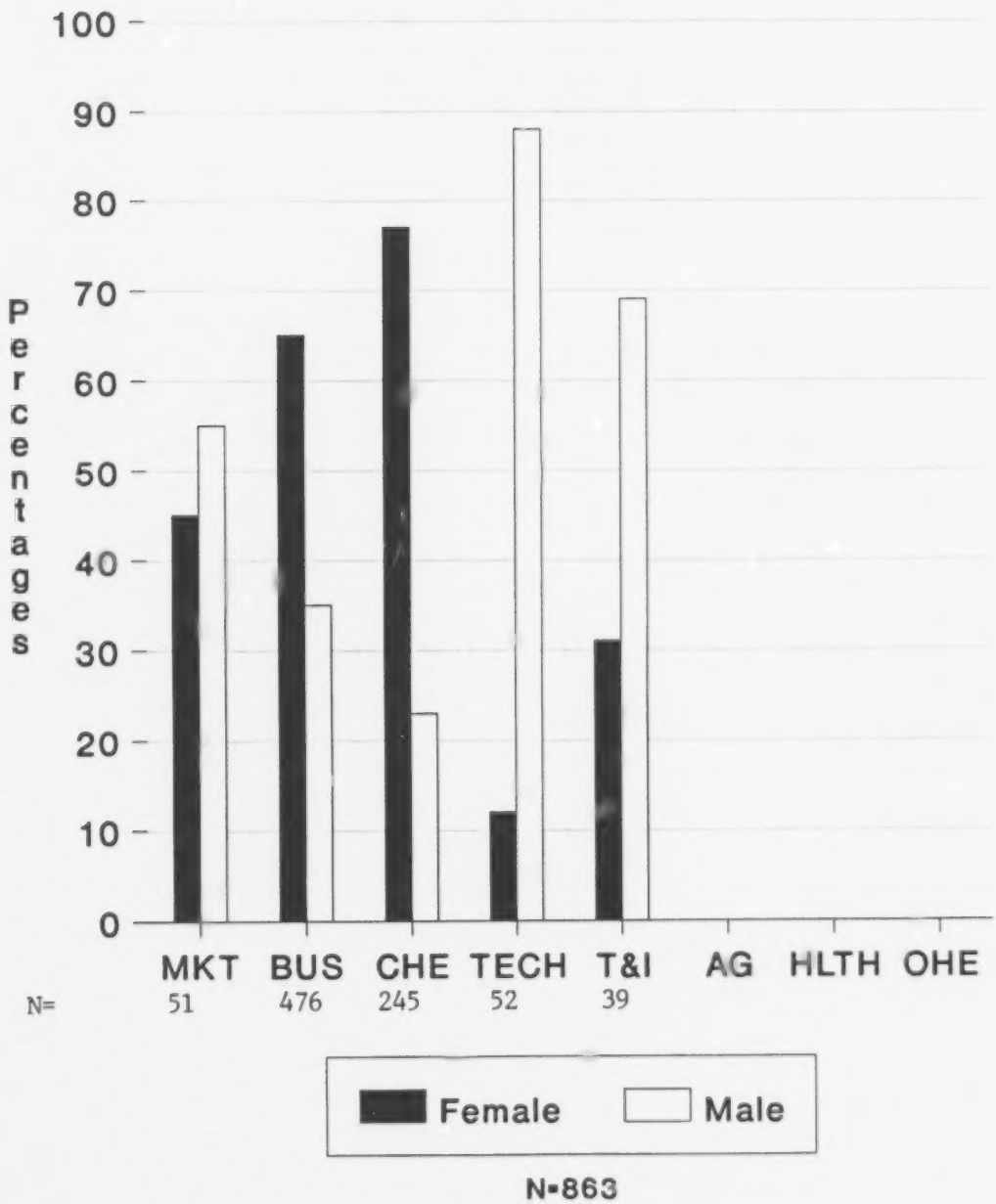


CHART B.4 - East Haven
Program Enrollments

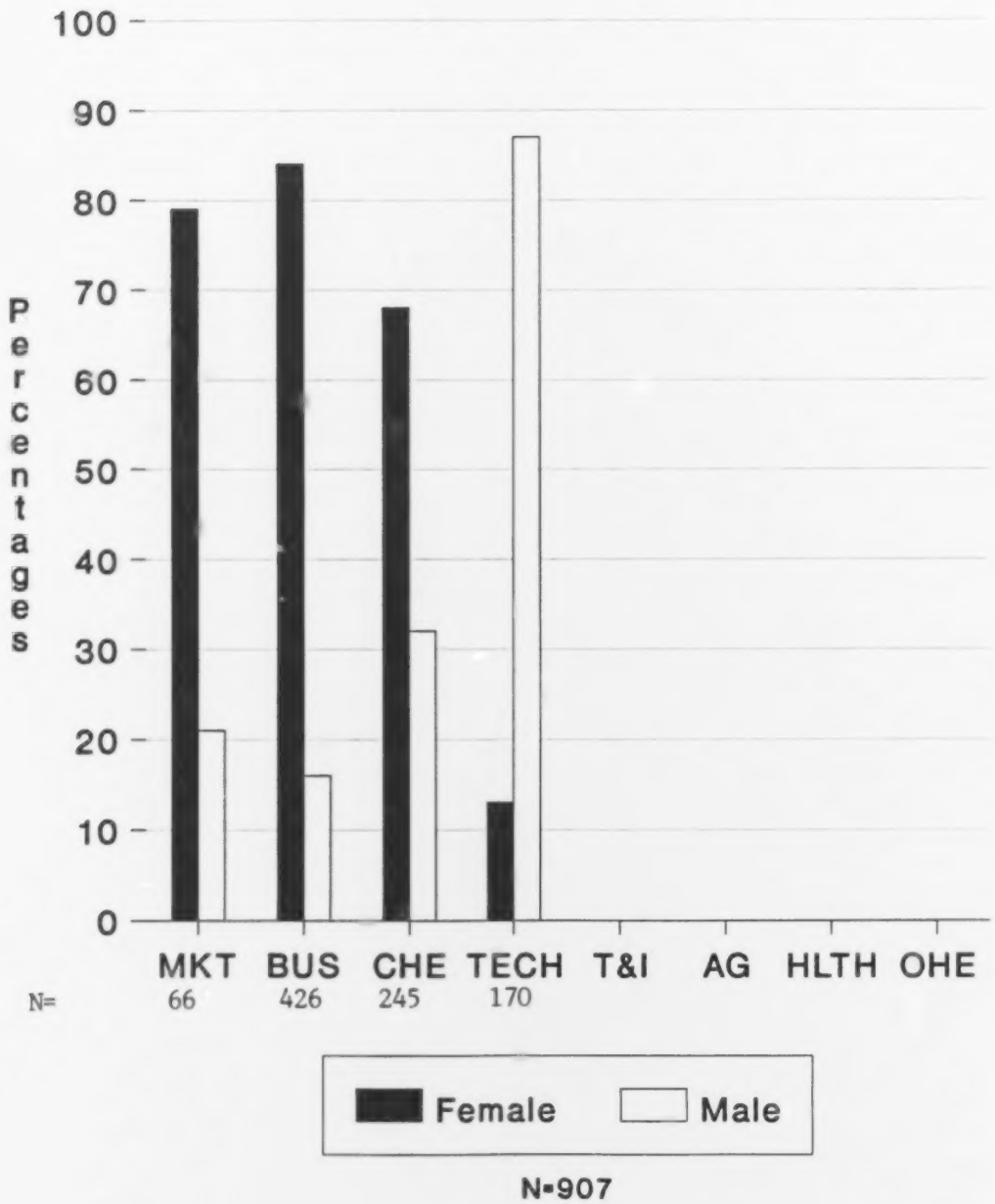


CHART B.5 - Bethel
Program Enrollments

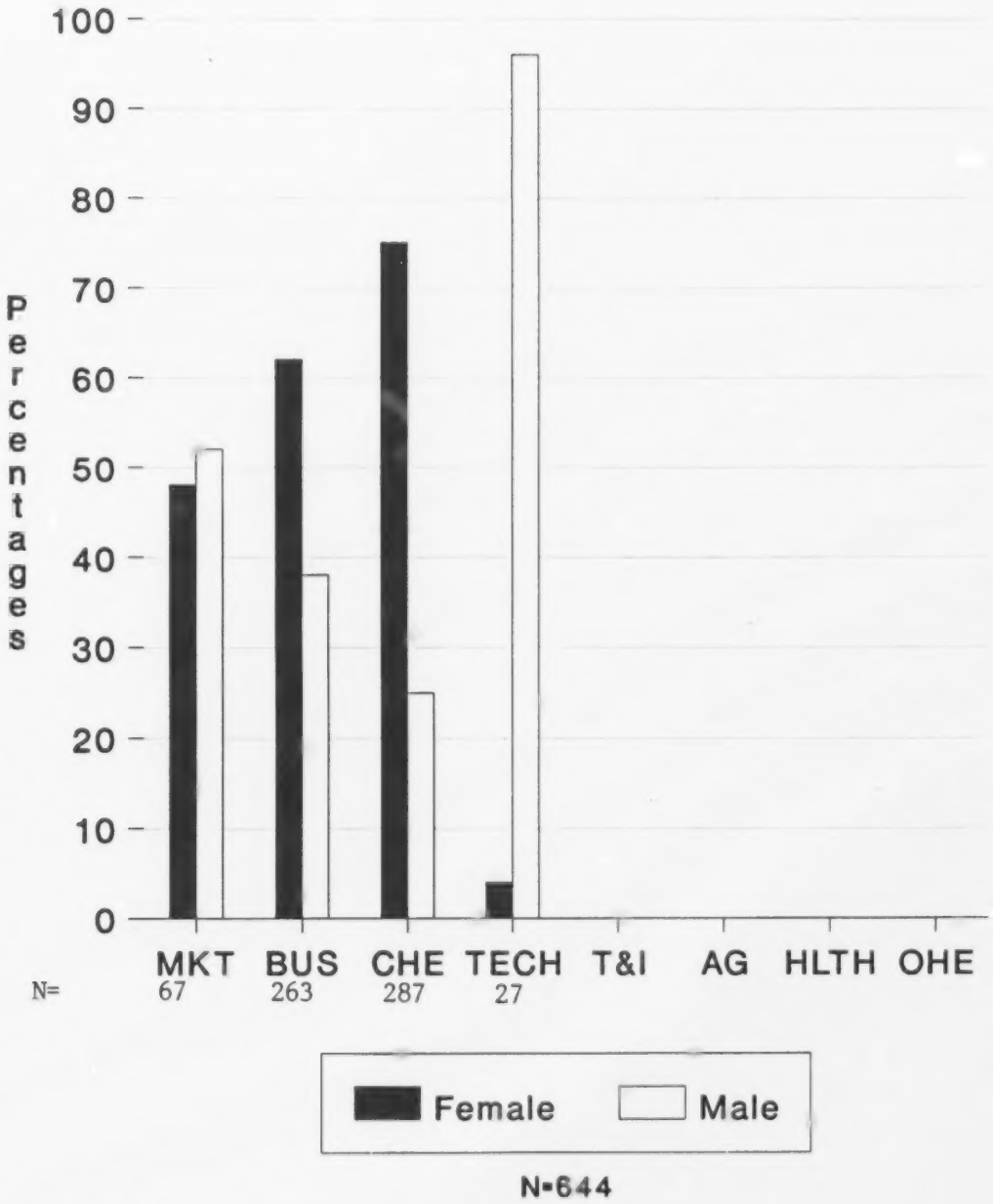


CHART B.6 - South Windsor
Program Enrollments

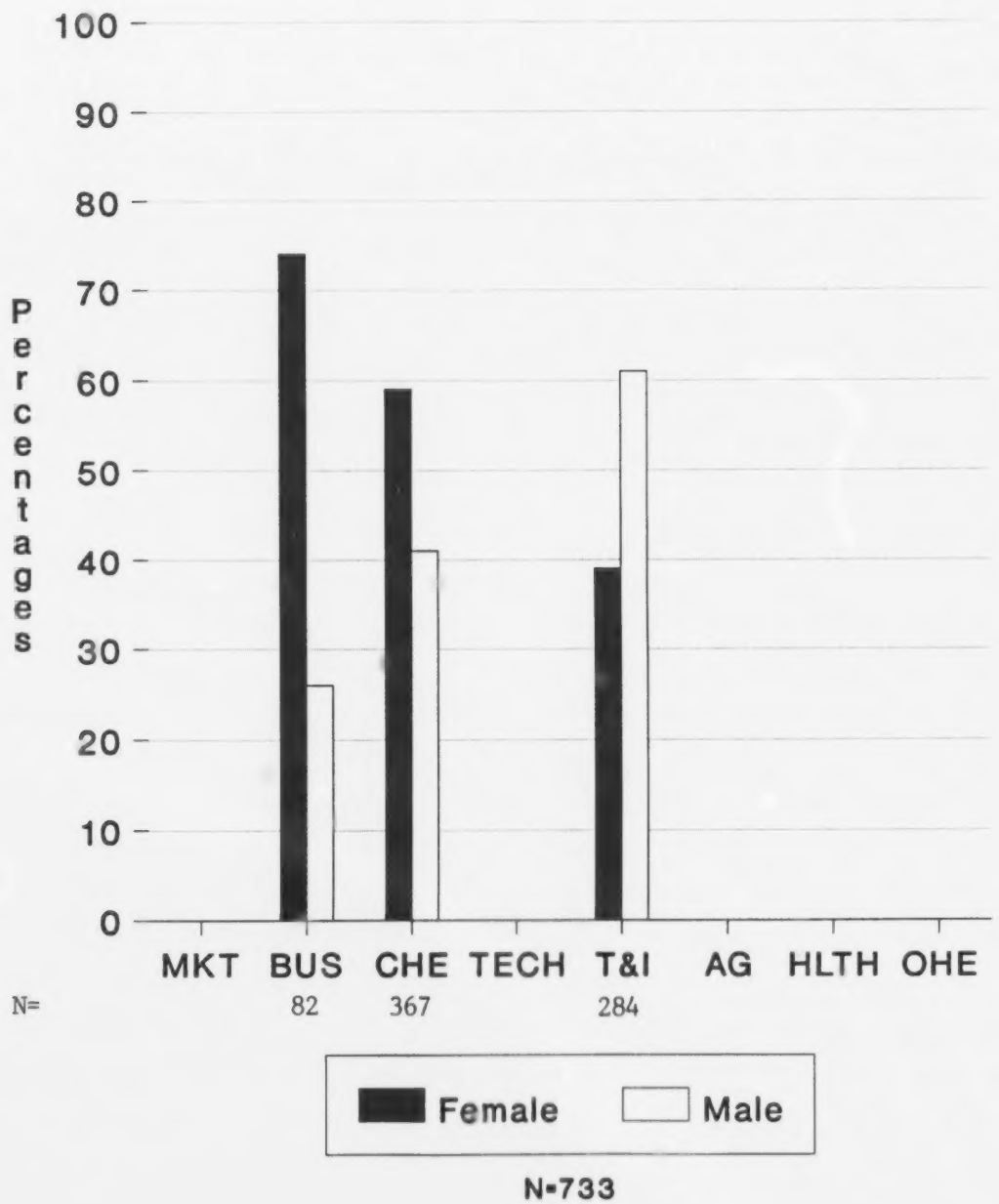
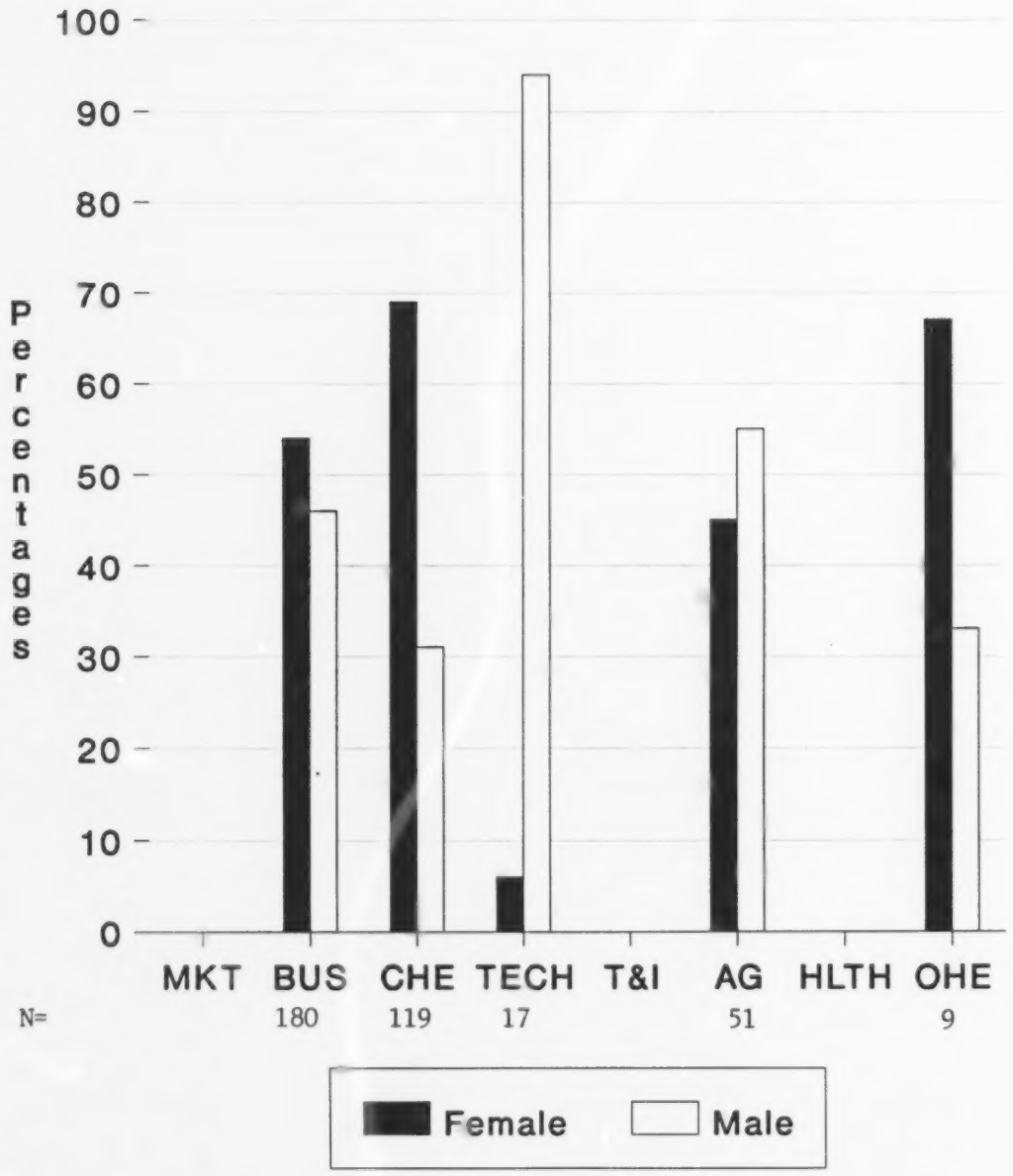


CHART B.7 - District #1 Housatonic
Program Enrollments



N=376

CHART B.8 - District #4 Valley
Program Enrollments

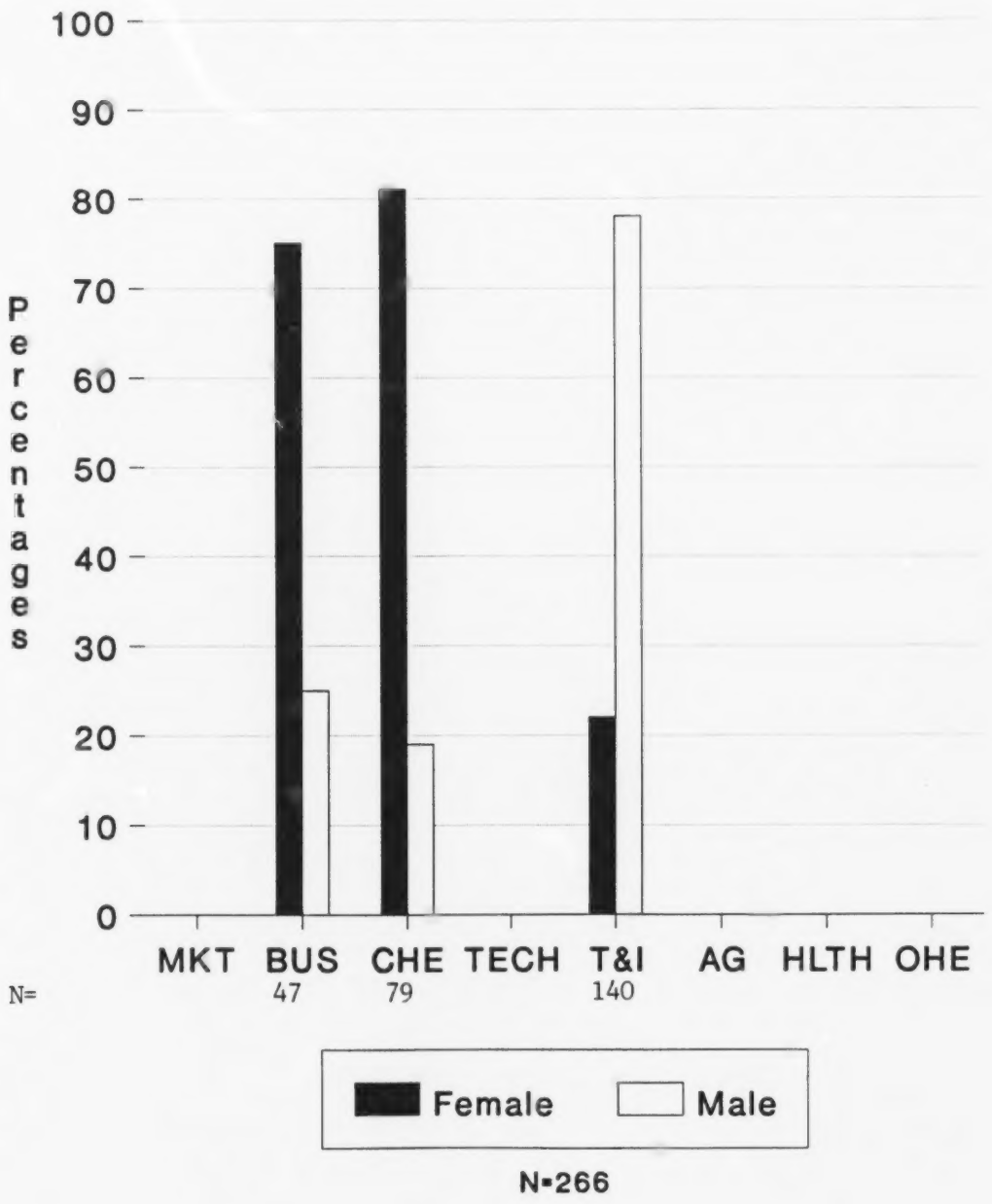
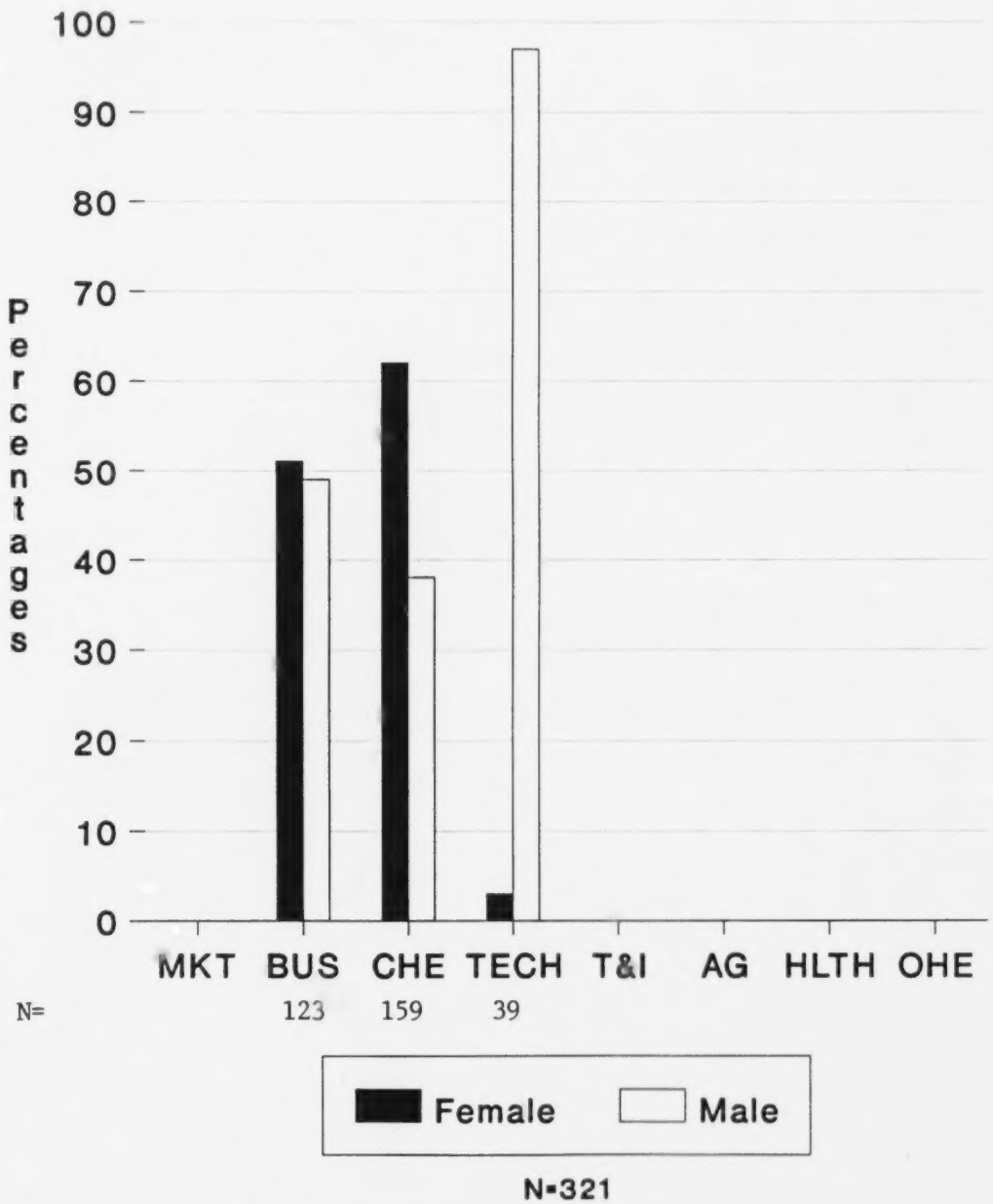


CHART B.9 - District #13 Coginchaug
Program Enrollments

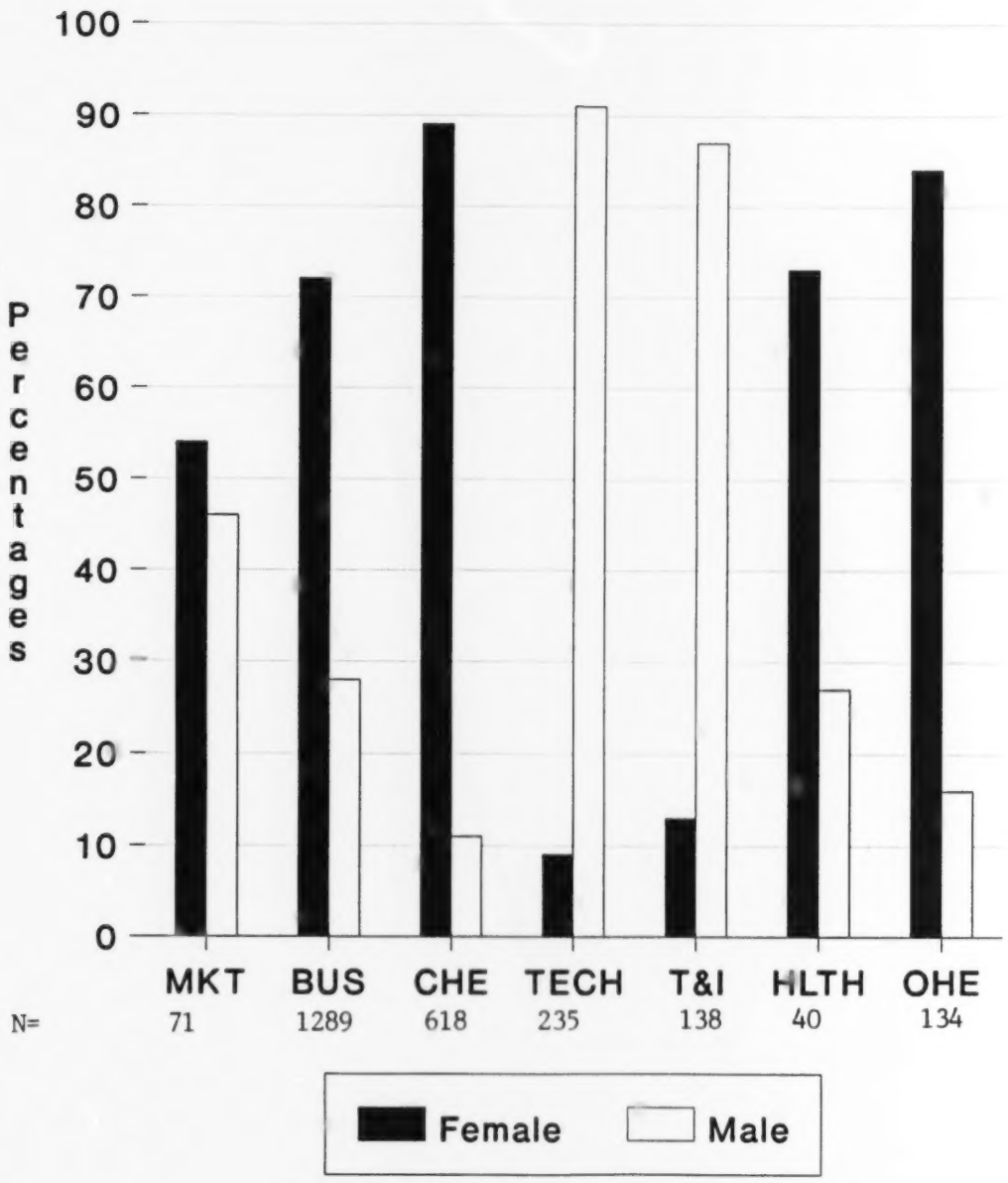


SECTION C
Vocational Programs x Gender x Race/Ethnicity

Interpretation of Section C

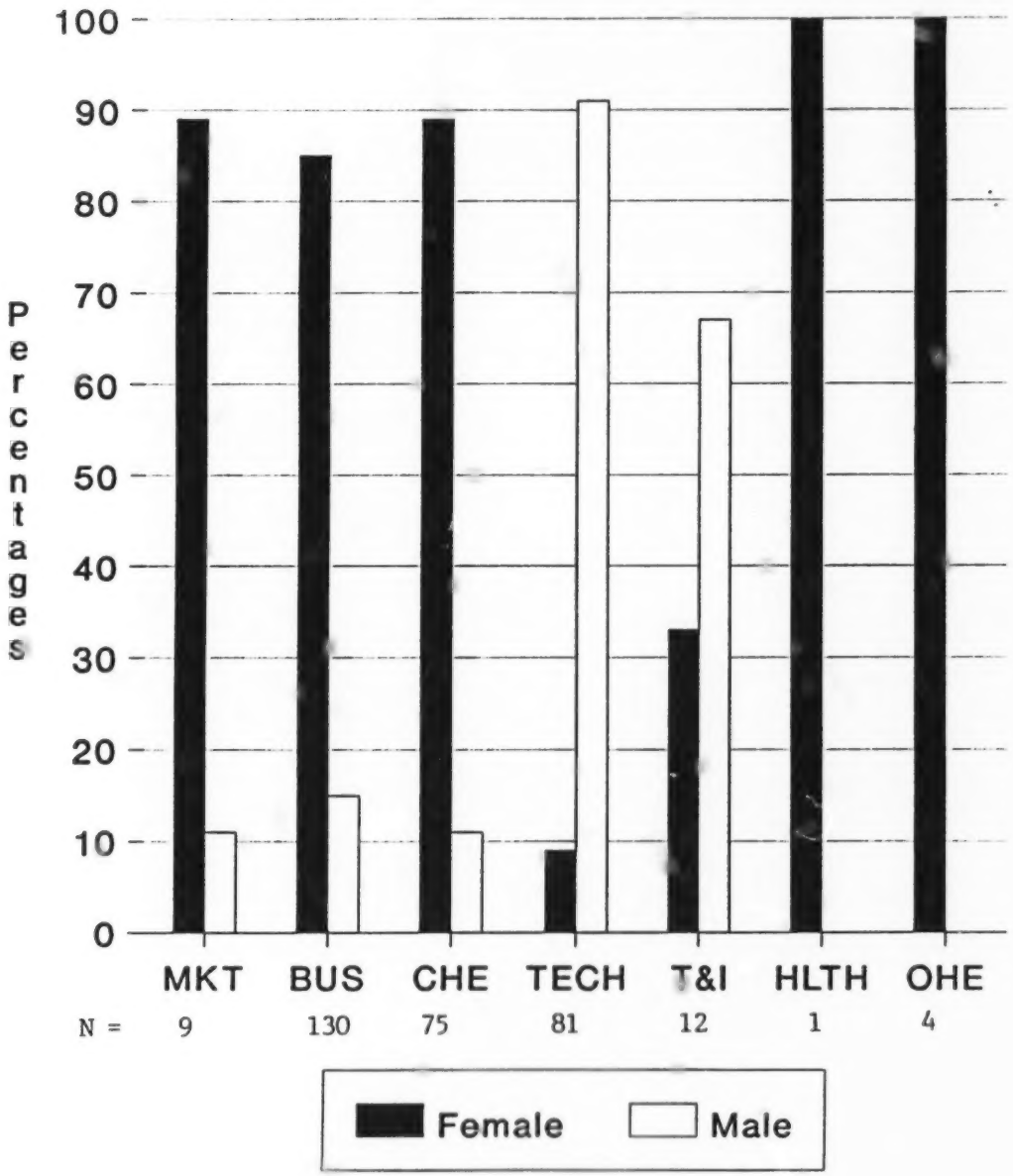
The graphs in this section show the relationship between race (Black, Hispanic, & White), gender and vocational program enrollments in the urban, suburban, and rural schools. These graphs exhibit gender segregation by vocational program regardless of racial/ethnic classification.

CHART C.1 - Urban Schools
Black Enrollments by Program



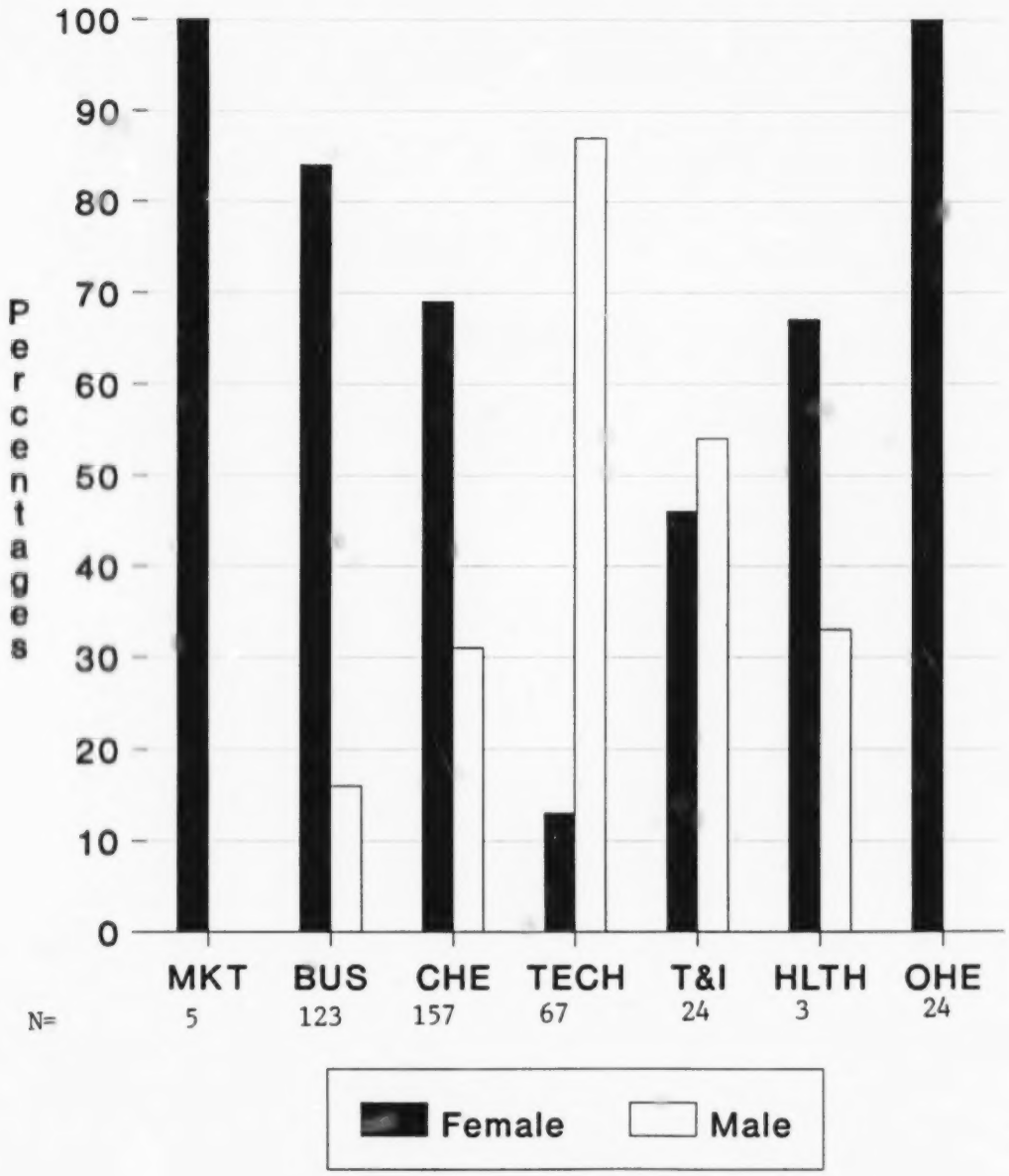
N=2525: Weaver, Hillhouse & Central

CHART C.2 - Urban Schools
Hispanic Enrollments by Program



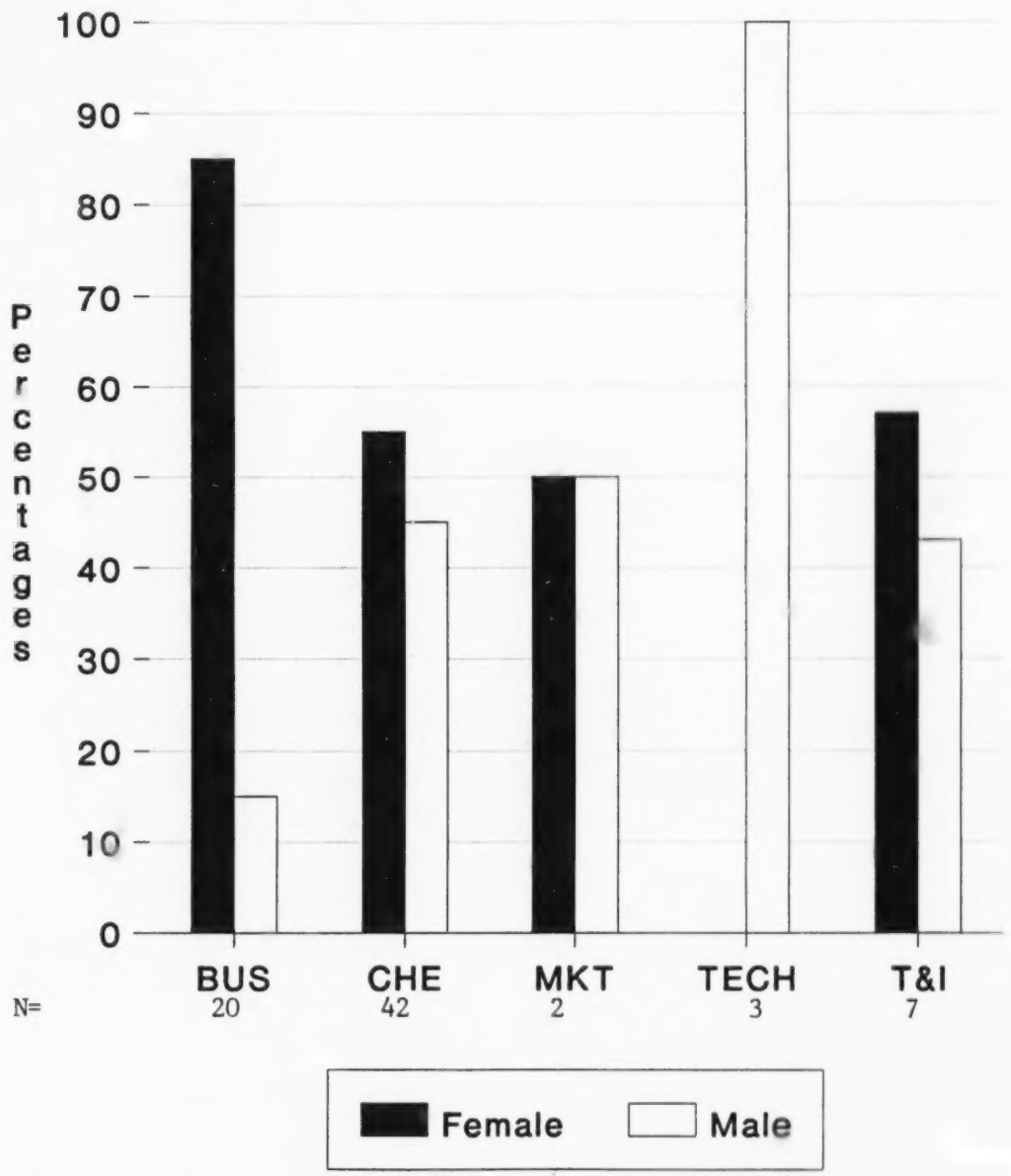
N=312 : Weaver, Hillhouse & Central

CHART C.3 - Urban Schools
White Enrollments by Program



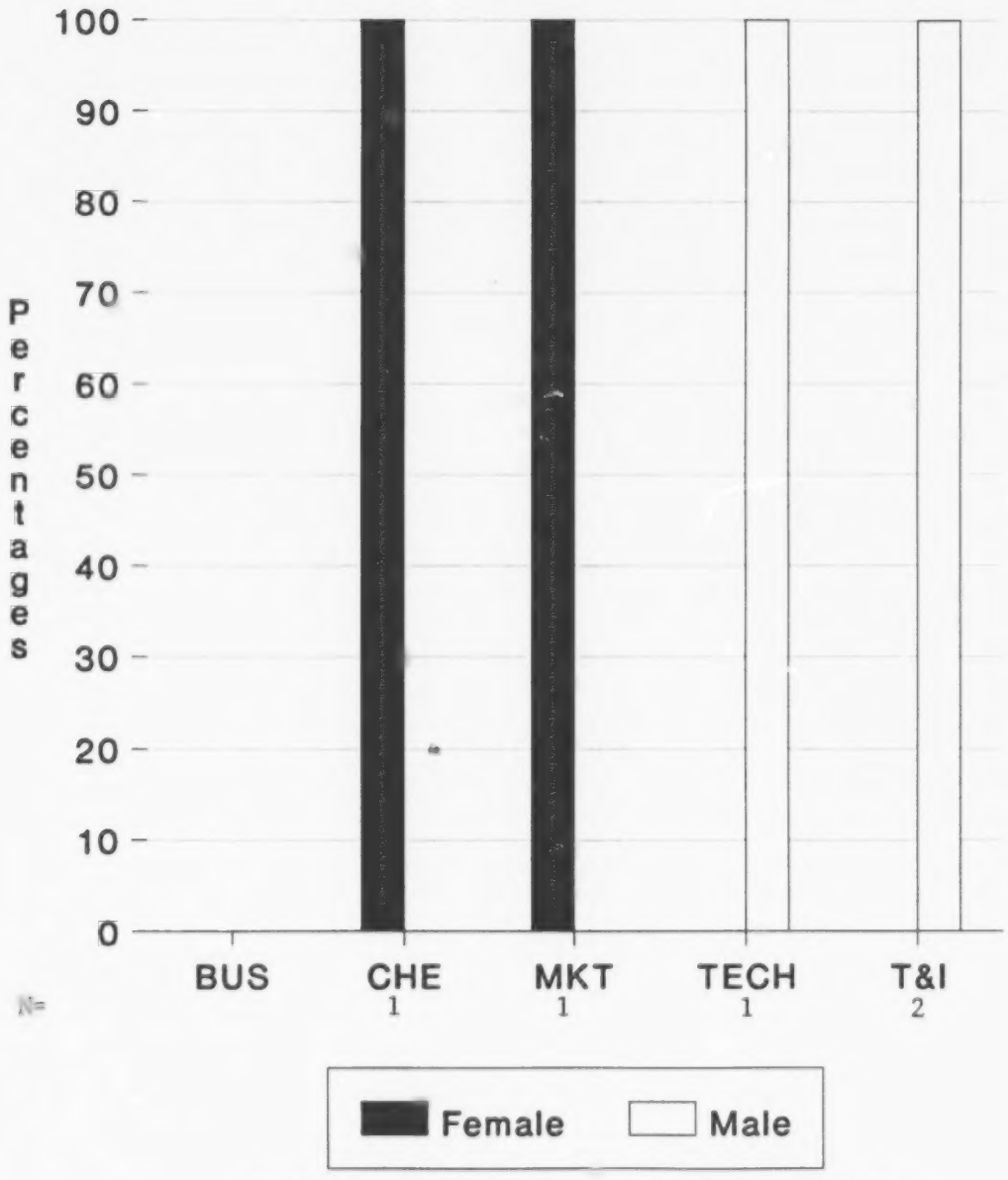
N=403: Weaver, Hillhouse & Central

CHART C.4 - Suburban Schools
Black Enrollments by Program



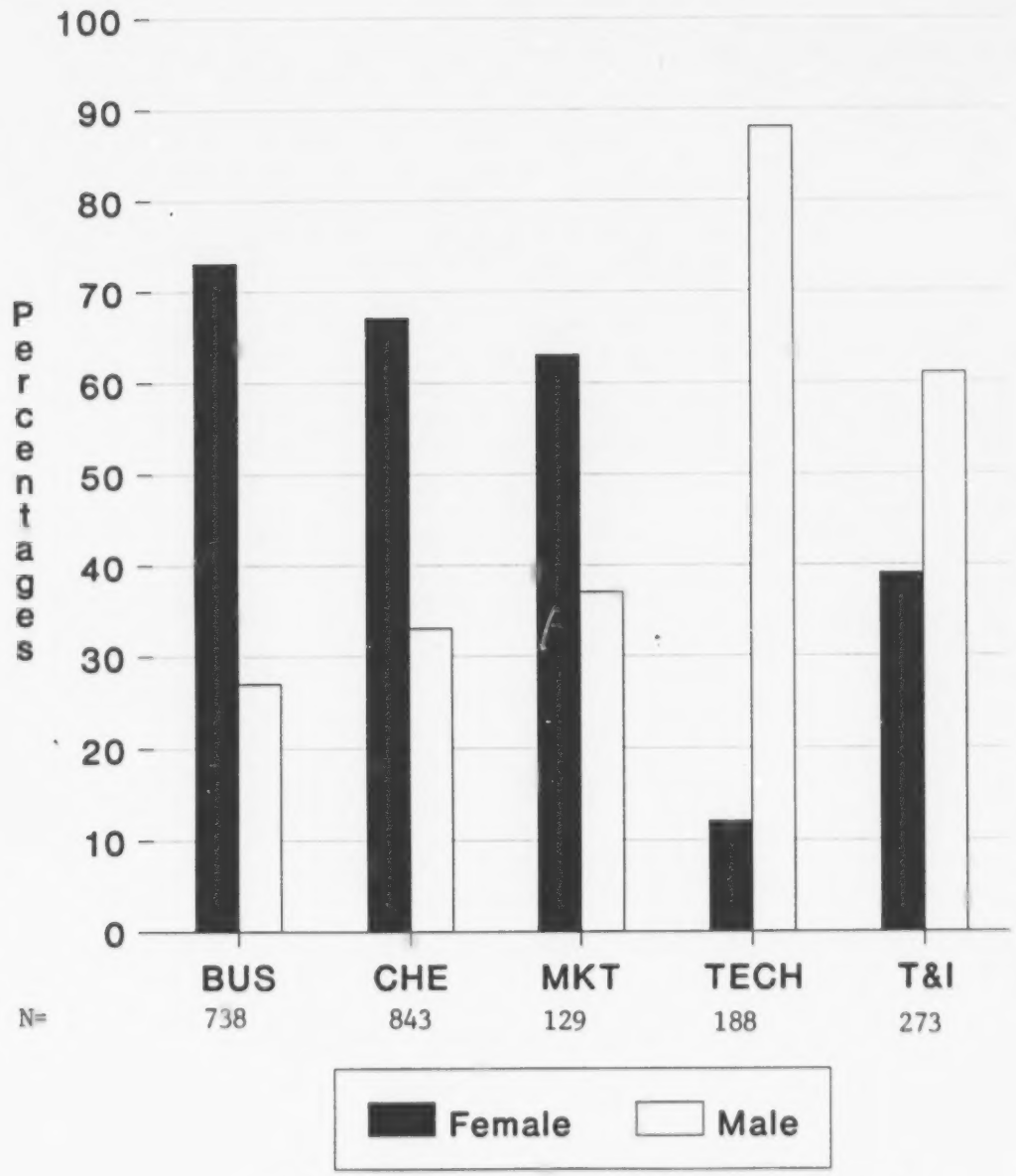
N=74: East Haven, Bethel & South Windsor

CHART C.5 - Suburban Schools
Hispanic Enrollments by Program



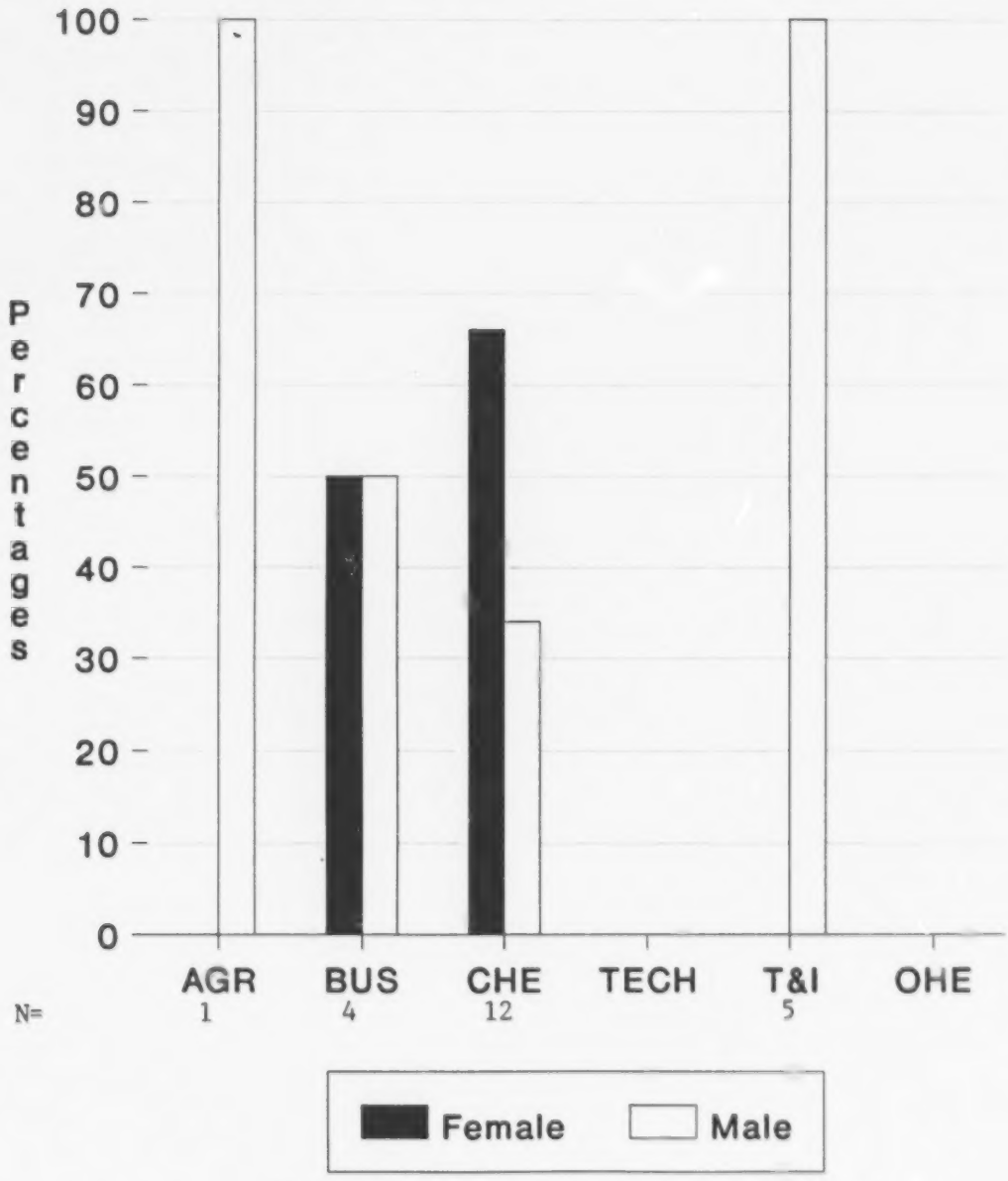
N=5: East Haven, Bethel & South Windsor

CHART C.6 - Suburban Schools
White Enrollments by Program



N=2171: East Haven, Bethel & South Wind

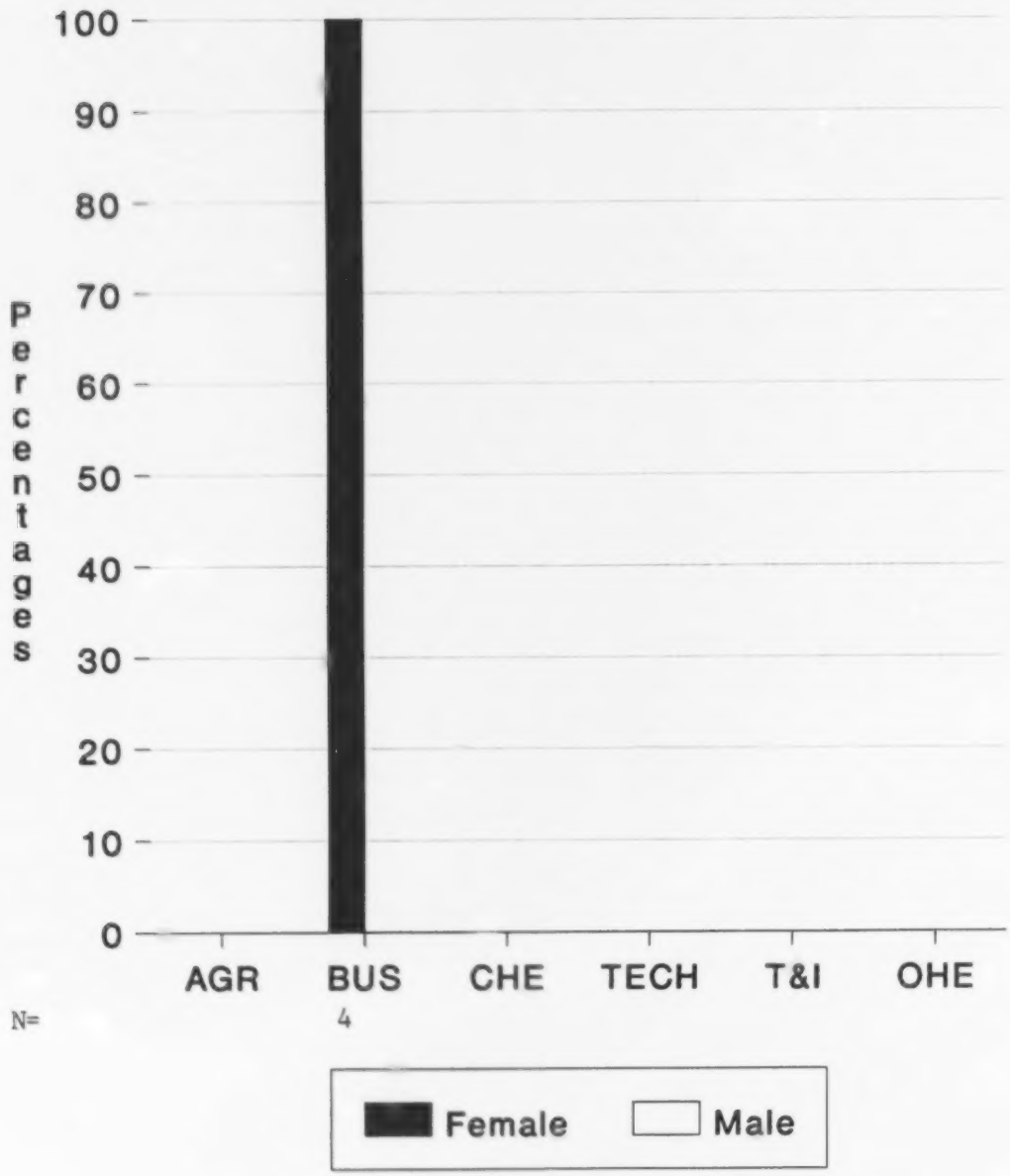
CHART C.7 - Rural Schools
Black Enrollments by Program



N=22: Housatonic, Valley & Coginchaug

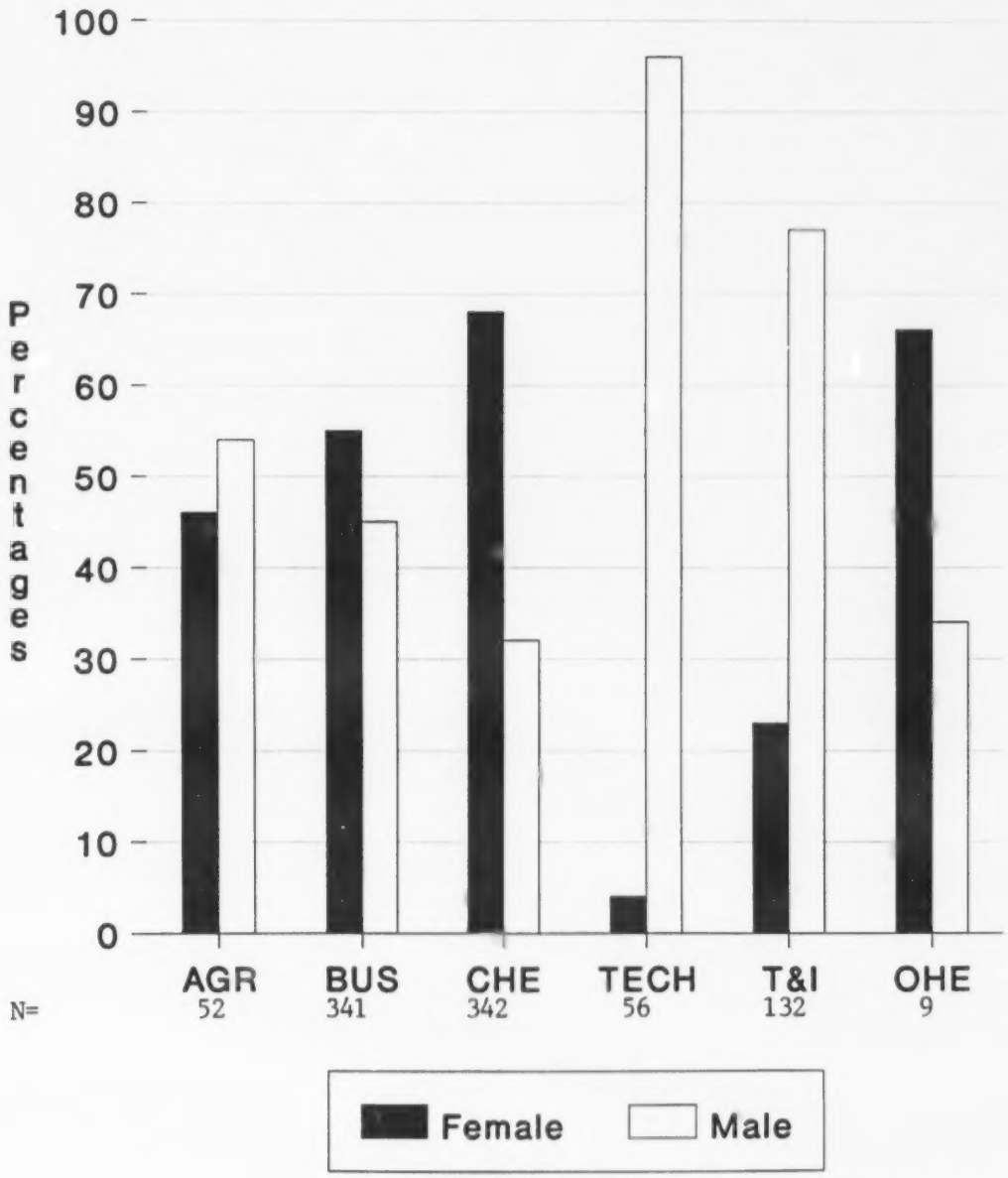
23

CHART C.8 - Rural Schools
Hispanic Enrollments by Program



N=4: Housatonic, Valley & Coginchaug

CHART C.9 - Rural Schools
White Enrollments by Program



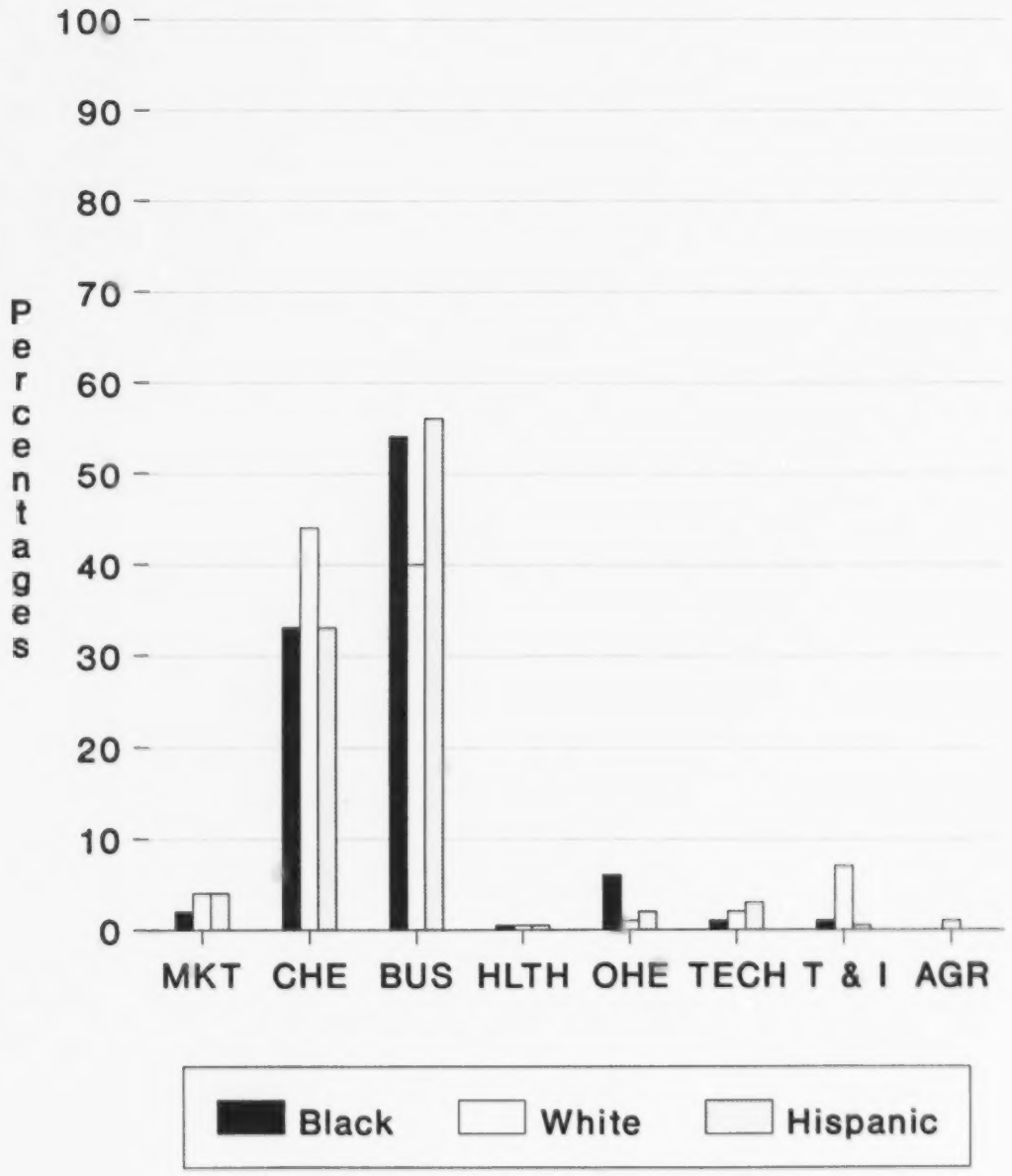
N=930: Housatonic, Valley & Coginchaug

SECTION D
Vocational Enrollments of Females x Race/Ethnicity

Interpretation of Section D

The graph in this section shows the relationship between race/ethnicity and vocational program enrollments for females in the 9 sample schools. This graph exhibits patterns of female stereotypical enrollments into occupations traditional for their gender (e.g., Consumer Home Economics and Business Education) across racial/ethnic classifications.

CHART D. VOCATIONAL ENROLLMENT
Percentage of Females by Race/Ethnicity



BLK=1745; HI=204; WH=2063

SECTION E
Discussion of Findings

In this section we propose the following questions about the relationships of the student characteristics reported in Sections A through D.

1. What is the relationship between gender and vocational program enrollments compared to total school populations? In other words, what are the proportions of male and female enrollees in vocational programs in comparison to their equal (50-50) representation in the 8 program offerings?

* EXAMPLE: At Hartford-Weaver (Chart B.3), Marketing Education is approaching gender equity: there are 45 percent females and 55 percent males enrolled in the program. Consumer Home Economics is a program nontraditional for males: 22 percent males and 78 percent females enrolled in this program. Technology Education is a program nontraditional for females: 12 percent females and 88 percent males enrolled in this program.

This data indicates that females are still marginalized in occupations traditional for their gender.

2. Are the gender distributions different or the same across racial/ethnic classifications? In other words, do race/ethnic populations exhibit over- or under-representation in programs traditional or nontraditional for females?

* EXAMPLE: In the three urban schools (Charts C.1 - C.3), vocational enrollments reflect gender segregation regardless of racial/ethnic classification. Programs such as Business Education, Consumer and Occupational Home Economics, and Health Occupations have female enrollments at or over 70 percent in all three racial groupings. Programs such as Technology Education and Trade & Industrial Education similarly reflect high levels of male enrollment patterns by racial/ethnic classifications--although White females and males in the latter program are about equitably represented.

This data indicates that gender distributions are generally the same across racial/ethnic classifications based upon a comparison of vocational program enrollments in urban, suburban, and rural schools.

3. Are the distributions of females different or the same based on racial/ethnic characteristics? In other words, do female enrollment patterns exhibit racial as well as gender segregation?

*EXAMPLE: In the sample schools (Chart D), vocational enrollments reflect patterns of traditional sex segregation across racial and ethnic lines. For example, over 70 percent of all females in each of the three racial/ethnic classifications are enrolled in Business Education and Consumer Home Economics.

This data indicates that females are segregated in traditional occupations for their gender regardless of

racial/ethnic classifications. (Female enrollments may reflect racial segregation as well as gender segregation as seen in the clustering of black females in Occupational Home Economics and white females in Trade and Industrial Education.)

An evaluation of the gender and racial/ethnic composition of students in vocational programs should consider the following factors when analyzing enrollment data on a district-by-district basis:

* Are female students and male students under-represented in occupations nontraditional for their gender?

* What is the gender distribution of vocational students across racial/ethnic classifications?

* Do female enrollment patterns exhibit racial as well as gender segregation?

School districts can improve the balance of gender and racial/ethnic enrollments in vocational education by committing themselves to equitable recruitment practices. Furthermore, there must be continual monitoring of enrollment patterns in order to discern retention and dropout rates of the school's females and multi-ethnic student populations.

Any attempts at vocational reform must begin to assess the composition of their student populations in order to bring about meaningful changes in the institutional patterns of racial/ethnic and gender segregation.

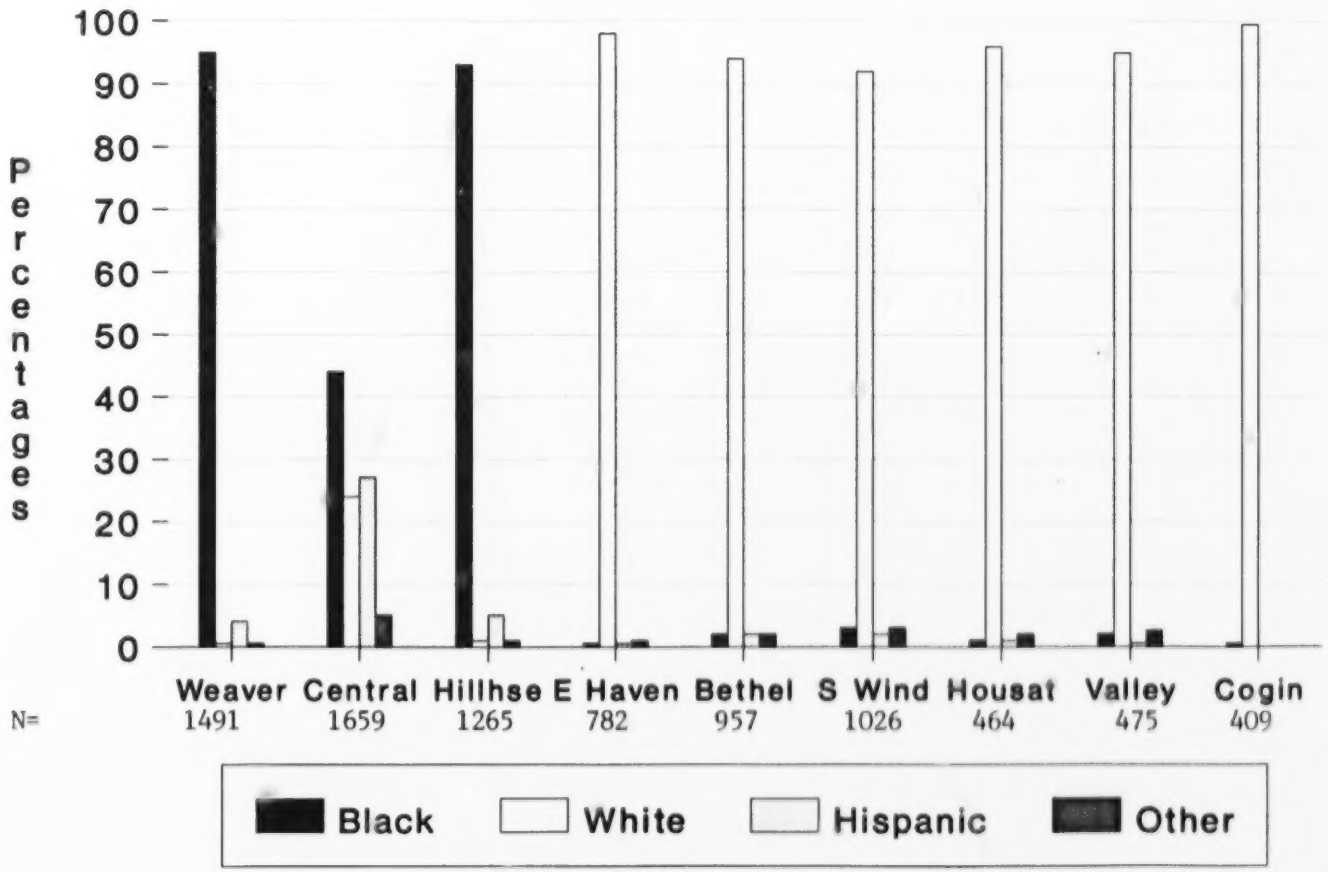
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Racial/Ethnic Distributions of Students

The following graph reflects the racial/ethnic distributions of student enrollments in each of the sample schools. Because of the paterns of racial segregation in Connecticut, school enrollments at urban schools such as Weaver High School in Hartford and Hillhouse High School in New Haven reflect predominately Black populations. Central High School in Bridgeport shows a more equitable distribution of races in the total school population. Both the rural and suburban schools in this study exhibit very low percentages of students of color. Thus, the racial/ethnic distributions in vocational programs are contingent upon school district locations throughout the state.

APPENDIX A. RACIAL/ETHNIC DISTRIBUTIONS

Total School Enrollments; N=8528



Other=American Indian & Asian American

APPENDIX B
Vocational Program Descriptions

Agricultural Education: students explore all phases of agriculture such as agricultural mechanics, animal science, plant science, land or water laboratories, and computer technology applications. The program prepares individuals for entrepreneurial opportunities or for entry into occupations in which agricultural knowledge and skills are required.

Business Education: students learn the knowledge and skills needed for entry-level employment and advancement in business careers. Students can specialize in areas such as accounting, information processing, general office and secretarial career areas.

Consumer Home Economics: students learn the skills, information and attitudes which will enable them to become contributing members of the home, family and community. The program offers study in various topics such as clothing and textiles, child care and development, consumer education, family and peer relationships, foods and nutrition, personal health and grooming, and management skills.

Health Occupations: students learn about the career choices in a variety of health occupations, and prepares them for employment at the assistant or technician level. Students participate in both classroom learning experiences and clinical learning experiences outside the school--primarily with local health facilities.

Marketing Education: students learn about employment in the various occupations concerned with the distribution, marketing and sale of goods. Instructional programs, including management and entrepreneurship, prepare students to perform marketing functions such as selling, buying, pricing, promoting, financing, transporting, storing and market research.

Occupational Home Economics: students prepare for employment in the areas of child care services, clothing services, food services and home health services. Insturctional programs provide the opportunities for students to extend classroom learning to the performance of all of the functions necessary for the operation of a successful small service business.

Technology Education: students study the broad aspects of industry, including construction, transportation, communication and manufacturing technology. Instructional programs help to develop in students an awareness of and appreciation for tools, machines and the processes of past and present technology. Classes are offered in drafting, electronics, graphic arts, industrial ceramics, metal technology, plastics technology, and power and wood technology.

Trade and Industrial Education: students prepare for entry-level occupations in the skilled trade areas including manufacturing and construction occupations related to the trade and industrial community. Students who participate, decide on a specific occupation or occupational cluster and learn advanced specialized skills during their vocational training.

APPENDIX C

The following socioeconomic data provides information about the districts represented in the nine sample schools.

BETHEL
COUNTY: FAIRFIELD (SUBURBAN)
1988 POPULATION: 17,930
PER CAPITA INCOME: 14,459
% PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 91.9%
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: 27,458
FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 3.7%
DISTRICT STUDENTS 1988-89
TOTAL: 3,224
MINORITY: 188 (5.8% OF TOTAL)
WHITES: 3,036 (94%) BLACKS: 47 (1%) ASIAN AMERCIANS: 75 (2%)
HISPANICS: 58 (1%) AMERICAN INDIANS: 8 (.5%)
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED: 50 (1.6% OF TOTAL)
HIGH SCHOOL GRADS: 244
PERCENT ENTERING LABOR MARKET: 23% OF 1988 GRADUATES (100% EMPLOYED)

EAST HAVEN
COUNTY: FRINGE CITY (SUBURBAN)
1988 POPULATION: 26,100
PER CAPITA INCOME: 14,651
PERCENT PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS: 83.5%
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: 21,131
FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 6.8%
TOTAL: 2,913
MINORITY: 57 (2.0% OF TOTAL)
WHITES: 2,756 (98%) BLACKS: 8 (.5%) ASIAN AMERICANS: 19 (1%)
HISPANICS: 23 (1%) AMERICAN INDIANS: 7 (.5%)
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED: 146 (5% OF TOTAL)
HIGH SCHOOL GRADS: 198
% ENTERING LABOR MARKET: 35.9 (100% EMPLOYED)

SOUTH WINDSOR
COUNTY: HARTFORD (SUBURBAN)
POPULATION: 21,950
PER CAPITA INCOME: 15,299
PERCENT PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 95.6%
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: 29,095
FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 2.3%
DISTRICT: 3,681
MINORITY: 333 (9.0% OF TOTAL)
WHITES: 3,348 (92%0) BLACKS: 83 (2%) ASIAN AMERICANS: 122 (3%)
HISPANICS: 57 (2%) AMERICAN INDIANS: 22 (1%)
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED: 26 (.7% OF TOTAL)
HIGH SCHOOL GRADS: 255
% ENTERING LABOR MARKET: 11.8% (80% EMPLOYED)

BRIDGEPORT
COUNTY: FAIRFIELD (URBAN)
1988 POPULATION: 139,770
PER CAPITA INCOME 9,427
PERCENT PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT; 77.1%
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: 16,694
FAMILIES BELOW POVERY LEVEL: 28.2%
DISTRICT STUDENTS:
TOTAL: 19,270
MINORITY: 16,398 (85.1% OF TOTAL)
WHITES: 2,872 (15%) BLACKS: 7,773 (40%) ASIAN AMERICANS: 759 (4%)
HISPANICS: 7,840 (41%) AMERICAN INDIANS: 26 (1%)
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED: 6,444 (33.4% OF TOTAL)
HIGH SCHOOL GRADS: 656
44.2% ENTERED LABOR MARKET (88.3% EMPLOYED)

HARTFORD
COUNTY: HARTFORD (URBAN)
1988 POPULATION: 131,300
PER CAPITA INCOME: 8,677
PERCENT PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS: 90.9%
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: 14,032
FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 33.1%
TOTAL: 24,404
MINORITY: 22,277 (91.3% OF TOTAL)
WHITES: 2,127 (9%) BLACKS: 10,570 (43%) ASIAN AMERICANS: 273 (1%)
HISPANICS: 11,420 (47%) AMERICAN INDIANS: 14 (.5%)
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED: 11,947 (49% OF TOTAL)
HIGH SCHOOL GRADS: 781
% ENTERING LABOR FORCE: 39.6 (93.2% EMPLOYED)

NEW HAVEN
COUNTY: NEW HAVEN (URBAN)
POPULATION: 123,840
PER CAPITA INCOME: 9,378
ENROLLEMENTS: 84.1%
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: 14,993
FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 31%
DISTRICT STUDENTS: 16,861
MINORITY: 13,863 (82.2% OF TOTAL)
WHITES: 2,999 (18%) BLACKS: 9,979 (59%) ASIAN AMERICANS: 270 (2%)
HISPANICS: 3,612 (21%) AMERICAN INDIANS: 2 (.5%)
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED: 6,779 (40.2% OF TOTAL)
HIGH SCHOOL GRADS: 745
% ENTERING LABOR MARKET: 17.4% (60.8% OF TOTAL)

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT #1 (RURAL)
MEMBER TOWNS:
CANAAN, CORNWALL, KENT, NORTH CANAAN, SALISBURY AND SHARON
DISTRICT STUDENTS: 468
MINORITY: 20 (4.3% OF TOTAL)
WHITES: 444 (96%) BLACKS: 11 (2%) ASIAN AMERICANS: 4 (1%)
HISPANICS: 5 (1%)
HIGH SCHOOL GRADS: 123
% ENTERING LABOR MARKET: 33.3 (100% EMPLOYED)

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT #4 (RURAL)
MEMBER TOWNS: CHESTER, DEEP RIVER, AND ESSEX
DISTRICT STUDENTS: 732
MINORITY: 25 (3.4% OF TOTAL)
WHITES: 707 (96%) BLACKS: 12 (1%) ASIAN AMERICANS: 10 (1%)
HISPANICS: 1 (.5%) AMERICAN INDIANS: 2 (.5%)
HIGH SCHOOL GRADS: 122
% ENTERING LABOR MARKET: 32.8% (100% EMPLOYED)

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT #13 (RURAL)
MEMBER TOWNS: DURHAM AND MIDDLEFIELD
DISTRICT STUDENTS: 1,456
MINORITY: 19 (1.3% OF TOTAL)
WHITES: 1,436 (98%) BLACKS: 14 (1%) ASIAN AMERICANS: 3 (.5%)
HISPANICS: 2 (.5%)
HIGH SCHOOL GRADS: 119
% ENTERING LABOR MARKET: 17.6% (100% EMPLOYED)